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SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/S N. CARTER-FOSTER
EUR/CE FOR J. MOORE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ECON SOCI LO

SUBJECT: INFORMATION ABOUT DISTRACTED DRIVING IN SLOVAKIA

REF: STATE 6703

LEGAL REGIME

(U) Slovak law bans all cell phone use--including texting--while operating a motor vehicle, although an exception is made for hands-free sets. Certain security and emergency services are exempted from this ban.

DATA ON CELL PHONE USE AND DISTRACTED DRIVING

(U) Cell phones and text messaging are widespread in Slovakia. There are approximately 5.6 million cell phone subscribers in a country with 5.4 million residents, yielding a market penetration rate of 104%. While there are no official statistics kept by the government, recent media reports indicate that Slovak carriers transmit about twice as many text messages as phone calls.

(U) The Slovak government does not keep statistics on the number of motor vehicle crashes caused by distracted driving.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND RESEARCH

(U) Since passing the law in October 2008, the Slovak government has not conducted any meaningful public awareness campaigns about distracted driving. A campaign conducted a couple of years ago by the government of the Czech Republic was broadcasted on many television stations received in Slovakia and widely viewed by the Slovak public.

(U) We have not been able to locate any research into the effectiveness of the Slovak ban on using cell phones while driving.

EDDINS